UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1991/48
27 March 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

First regular session of 1991
13-31 May and 17-21 June 1991
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Letter dated 19 March 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of an article which appeared in the newspaper Granma, the official organ of the Communist Party of Cuba, on 9 March 1991 and entitled "Socialism: Unconquerable human rights shield of all the sons of Cuba" (see annex).

I should appreciate it if you would have this note and its annex circulated as an official document of the Economic and Social Council.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON de QUESADA
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

* E/1991/30.

READEX FICHE

Annex

SOCIALISM: UNCONQUERABLE HUMAN RIGHTS SHIELD OF ALL THE SONS OF CUBA

The peaceful Swiss city of Geneva is becoming, or at least identifying itself as, a centre of ideological bias, confrontation and the harshest hatred directed against Cuba.

The people of Geneva, of course, have nothing to do with this. The only advocates of a position that amounts to an insane obsession are the members of the United States delegation to the Commission on Human Rights, which meets in that city and has just been the scene of another infamous anti-Cuban spectacle.

This past 5th of March, the Commission took decisions on two draft resolutions regarding the observance of human rights in Cuba.

The first draft had been drawn up by Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, was co-sponsored by a group of non-aligned countries, and also had the consent of Cuba. That document was the occasion for the expression of friendly positions on the Cuban revolution by Latin American and third-world countries.

The second draft resolution was the work of the United States delegation, which for the umpteenth time used that international forum to vent all its anti-Cuban spleen. It had the support of its NATO allies and of other industrialized countries.

On the diplomatic scene, when the time came to vote, the differences between our developing countries and the first-world bloc led by the United States became obvious. Washington resorted to all the weapons in its vast arsenal: from procedural stratagems to the most brutal extortion.

Consideration was given early on to a procedural motion not to take action on the aggressive United States draft. The proposal was adopted by 18 votes to 17, with 8 abstentions.

The United States did not admit defeat: it did not scruple to introduce two amendments to the Latin American and non-aligned draft, making it essentially anti-Cuban. The United States amendments were voted on, this time with the favourable result of 21 votes to 18, with four abstentions.

The situation had been reversed. The Latin American document, with the two anti-Cuban "embellishments", had become unacceptable to its original Latin American sponsors. Accordingly, in the third and last vote on the amended draft resolution, the Latin Americans opted to abstain.

Even in this last complex circumstance, a feeling of decency and solidarity prevailed among our Latin American brothers. The United States interpolation could not be sanctioned and, by its abstentions, Latin America indicated that it was taking its distance from its arrogant northern neighbour.

Despite this, the resolution was adopted. The so-called document contains no reproaches or condemnation of our country, because there are no reasons for them, as the report submitted to the Commission by the United Nations Secretary-General states. But the United States manoeuvre places Cuba in the ignominious position of having to prove its innocence and this unjustified and discriminatory treatment is unacceptable to each and every Cuban.

Washington is suffering from a syndrome of triumphalist inebriation, apparently stemming from the impunity with which it goes about taking action in an increasingly unipolar world. Perhaps it is this euphoria that makes it continue to attack the Cuban revolution, in the mistaken conviction that it will be able to make it change course. This time its biased intent - although it has not been able to bring forward one single specific piece of evidence - is to have Cuba sit in the dock.

Seated there, as they always have been, are intimate friends of the United States like Israel or South Africa. No one will ever be able to make Cuba sit beside them, because Cuba does not acknowledge that the United States or its allies have any political or moral authority to set themselves up as judges of the social process that has done more, in the entire history of the hemisphere, to help its citizens effectively enjoy and exercise human rights.

The intention is to present Cuba as "isolated in the world". The messiah George Bush, in his dangerous pleas for a new world order in the image and likeness of the United States, does not stop for reflection in his anxiety to control the United Nations system, to take the Security Council hostage or make it into a "video club", and to keep the United Nations Secretary-General from exercising his powers, confining him in an innocuous role that paralyses the world Organization at a time when what is at stake is war or peace.

In the Commission, the United States tried to twist the arms of the member States, but found itself having to face the Latin Americans and the non-aligned countries unwilling to serve as accomplices in such a dirty trick.

Cuba finds it profoundly encouraging that in the vote on the Yankee amendments it had on its side Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, countries which incarnated in their vote the living word of their independent leaders; non-aligned countries like Yugoslavia, Iraq, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mauritania, Somalia and Zambia, which know by experience the game rules that Cuba follows; and its brothers, the Soviet Union, China and the Ukraine.

However, some black sheep turned up in the sheepfold, and in every instance they betrayed the sentiments of the peoples they should have been representing. That was the case of Argentina, which, rather than joining the group of countries that sponsored the Latin American draft, did an indescribable balancing act and ended up voting with the Yankee clique.

There is not much to be said about the Argentine vote: the wire services insisted ad nauseam on the fact that, with one telephone call, George Bush had persuaded the Argentine President, Carlos Ménem, to break Latin American unity, dissociate himself from the consensus of the Río Group, and agree to take the mess of pottage.

It would seem that the half-baked logic of the Ménem government is to make a place for itself in the "new order" that Bush is promising the world. Who knows if this same mad scramble for crumbs led him also to make his pitiful military contribution to the Gulf War.

In the case of the Commission and Cuba, the Argentine position is pathetic, because it would appear that President Ménem had no alternative but to act counter to the wishes of his people. It is, incidentally, worth reminding the brave Argentine people that nothing and no one can sway Cuba from its well-known support for the just causes of this southern nation, from the Malvinas Islands to the very last of its patriotic claims.

And the same applies to others - such as Cyprus and Madagascar - who also caved in to pressure from Washington and fell back on a dubious abstentionism or a vote with the United States. In Nicosia and Antananarivo they know perfectly well that Cuba has defended the vital interests of these nations as if they were its own, and they should know that henceforth the Cuban Government will not deviate by one iota from its positions against the unjust occupation of part of Cyprus or against the former colonial Power's holding by force of islands in the Indian Ocean, in violation of Malagasy sovereignty.

It cannot be otherwise. From the imperturbable heights of their dignity as free men, the Cubans sit and look at them with a mixture of sorrow and commiseration. As for the Commission and its anti-Cuban decision, we consider it null and void, because it is the monstrous spawn of blackmail and pressure.

Cuba will continue collaborating with all the United Nations institutions and especially with the Secretary-General, as it has always done. This resolution bears on only one aspect which, in practice, has been resolved by Cuba's clear position on human rights.

Cuba can serve as an exemplar of human rights! Now, just as it has for more than three decades, the Cuban people is victoriously facing poverty, racial discrimination, exploitation, unemployment and all the scars inherited from capitalism and its market economy. Against these evils, Cuba has erected, in fact and in deed, like proud monuments, the basic human rights to employment, housing, education and health, to name the main ones.

As part of its plan for socialist development, there stands the unconquerable shield that protects the human rights of all the sons of Cuba. To those who - because they were so weak or so spineless - were not able to see this and who cast their vote against Cuba in Geneva, it is worth recalling, with Martí, an indelible episode of American history:

> "We must have no compulsion about going forward for a while alone, as it seems we must, knowing as we do that our army is beneath the earth and it will rise up when its hour comes and will come down from the heavens, ready and well armed: and to console ourselves we need do nothing more than look at the friendly nation of Mexico, which is the one that lies closest to us, where the Indian Suárez fled with his 30 madmen later called 'the immaculate ones' where

he fled across the mountains with an empire at his back and a rapacious republic before him, a republic that offered its help in exchange for an ingnominious concession; and the nation of the fugitive Indian ... is today courted as being wise and free, intellectual and industrial, by the powerful nations of the earth .... Let those whose spirit is weak take heart: with 30 men one can make a nation!"

And we Cubans are quite a bit more than 30 men. We are millions. We are an entire people, proud and unbeatable, with innate human dignity, which because of its revolution can be held up as an example for the world.